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which is calculated on the basis of the unique bit string and at least one of the identification code and the identification code in encoded form.

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 were previously pending in the application.

Claims 1-27 are cancelled and replaced with new claims 28-50.

Claims 1-8, 10-20, 23-25 and 27 are rejected as anticipated by PINTSOV et al. 5,448,641.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested because the reference does not disclose or suggest making available one or more unique bit strings to one of the terminals and the step of transmitting data including a copy of a unique bit string in combination with an identification code to a central office and storing the data in a second memory as recited in new claim 28 of the present application.

By way of example, page 18, lines 17-28 in conjunction with Figure 1 of the present application disclose a central office 34 in which a set of unique bit strings is generated and stored in a first memory 38. One or more of these unique bit strings are made available to one or more terminals 2. The terminals establish an identification code (that may comprise a user identification code and/or a printer identification code of the terminal). Then the terminal sends back to the central

office a copy of the received one or more unique bit strings in combination with that identification code and the central office stores that data in a second memory 40. Therefore, the central office knows that one or more unique bit strings have been safely received by the terminal and stores them with an identification related to for example a user or a printer. Accordingly, the second memory shows which unique bit strings have been made available and can be expected to return from postal documents.

Column 16, lines 49-50 of PINTSOV et al. disclose a set of hash values ("unique numbers") stored in a postal evidence center or in a date center or other data depository. Each hash code relates to a rating table that is currently valid or was valid in the past. Each hash code is a unique number in the sense that it cannot be calculated from the content of the rating table when a hash calculation and a related hash key are unknown. Each postage evidencing device 114 must verify this data to check the validity of the rating tables received from data center 112. The hash codes are not unique in the sense that they are transmitted only once between the data center 112 and the plurality of postage evidencing devices. Each one of the postage evidencing devices 114 will receive the same rating table and hash code that is currently valid. The hash code as transmitted is only intended to verify which rating table is used. By reading and analyzing the hash value from a postal document, the verification center is able to determine the specific postal or

carrier rating table utilized and can determine whether the rating table used by the mailer was within a predetermined validity period.

The purpose of PINTSOV et al. is thus, to prevent users from using an outdated rating table present within their postage evidencing device 114. However, all postal documents posted within the validity period of one and the same rate table will, therefore, have the same hash value. Accordingly, there is a one-way transmission of data from the data center 112 to the plurality of postage evidencing devices 114. As disclosed on column 10, line 49 through column 11, line 20 of PINTSOV et al., once the data is received by the evidencing device 114, the evidencing device decrypts the data and either uses data to print or if the integrity of the data cannot be verified, the postage evidencing device may be inhibited from further operation. PINTSOV et al. do not disclose or suggest making available one or more of said unique bit strings to one terminal and transmitting data including a copy of the unique bit strings in combination with the identification code to the central office and storing the data in a second memory as recited in claim 28 of the present application.

Claims 29-36 depend from claim 28 and further define the invention and are also believed patentable over the cited prior art.

New claim 37 recites that the terminals are arranged to

transmit data including a copy of one or more unique bit strings in combination with the identification code to the central office, the central office being arranged to store the data in a second memory. The comments above regarding claim 28 are equally applicable to claim 37.

Claims 38-46 depend from claim 37 and further define the invention and are also believed patentable over the cited prior art.

Claims 9, 21 and 22 are rejected as unpatentable over PINTSOV et al. in view of HAYNES 4,700,294. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

HAYNES is cited for teaching a means for compressing input data from sets of collated parameters which include a three-memory embodiment. HAYNES does not teach or suggest transmitting data including a copy of a unique bit string in combination with an identification code to a central office and storing the data in a second memory as recited in claims 28 and 37. Since claims 9 and 21 are rewritten as claims 36 and 46 respectively and depend from claims 28 and 37, the combination of references would not render obvious new claims 36 and 46.

Claim 22 is rewritten as new claim 47 and recites a plurality of terminals and a central input means to receive from said plurality of terminals data including a copy of one or more unique bit strings in combination with an identification code, to store the data in a second memory. The comments above regarding

claim 28 are equally applicable to new claim 47.

New claim 48 corresponds to original claim 23 and recites a printing device at least structured and arranged for receiving data from an information card, the data at least comprising a unique bit string originating from a set of unique bit strings, a printing device comprising means for compiling the data and making the data available for the franking mark for the document in machine readable form. New claim 48 is written in 35 USC 112, sixth paragraph format which requires that the reference must disclose identical or equivalent structure to that of the application that performs the exact recited function.

As seen in Figure 1 of PINTSOV et al., printer 122 is coupled to control module 118. Module 118 is part of postage evidencing device 114. Accordingly, postage evidencing device 114 receives data and then compiles the data, making the data available for a franking mark. This information is then transmitted electronically to printer 122.

Applicants believe that the printing device of PINTSOV et al. does not comprise means for compiling data and making the data available for the franking mark as disclosed on page 10, line 6 through page 11, line 14 of the present application.

Claim 49 depends from claim 48 and further defines the invention and is also believed patentable over the cited prior art.

New claim 50 corresponds to original claim 25 and

recites an information carrier in the form of a card provided with a memory which at least contains the following data: a unique bit string selected from a set of unique bit strings, an identification code and a message authentication code.

PINTSOV et al. at column 5, lines 47-62, for example, disclose that data from the data center 112 is communicated to postage evidencing device 114 by modem, disc, magnetic or smart card. The data communicated only contains the hash value (unique bit string). The identification code is established by the evidencing device 114 and is not provided in the memory of the card. In addition, PINTSOV et al. does not teach a message authentication code which is calculated on the basis of a unique bit string and at least one of the identification code and the identification code in encoded form as part of the data in an information carrier in the form of a card as further recited in claim 50.

Claim 26 is rejected as unpatentable over PINTSOV et al. in view of PEYRET 5,688,056. The cancellation of claim 26 is believed to obviate this rejection.

The concept of generating a set of unique bit strings that are transmitted once to terminals and storing them again after having received an acknowledgement of the terminal together with an identification code is missing from each of the references. Using the method and apparatus of the present invention, it is possible to provide franking marks on documents

with unique information related to that document. The hash codes of PINTSOV et al. are found on all documents that are posted within a validity period of the rating table to which the hash code relates and do not provide a franking mark on a document with unique information related to that document.

Accordingly, it is believed that the new claims avoid the rejection under §103 and are allowable over the art of record.

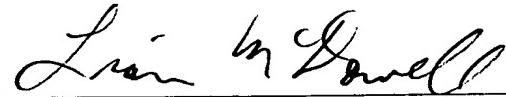
In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that the present application has been placed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Should there be any matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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